



Pioneer Printing in Texas

By Douglas C. McMurtrie



PIONEER PRINTING IN TEXAS

TRANSLATION
THE
LAWS, ORDERS, AND CONTRACTS
ON
COLONIZATION,
FROM JANUARY, 1821, UP TO THIS TIME
IN VIRTUE OF WHICH
COL. STEPHEN . AUSTIN.
HAS INTRODUCED AND SETTLED FOREIGN EMIGRANTS IN
TEXAS,
WITH AN
EXPLANATORY INTRODUCTION

SAN FILIPE DE AUSTIN, TEXAS:
PRINTED BY GODWIN B. COTTEN.

November, 1829.

[Title Page of the First Volume Printed in Texas]

**PIONEER
PRINTING
IN TEXAS**

By
DOUGLAS C. McMURTRIE

AUSTIN · TEXAS
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Pioneer Printing in Texas¹

By Douglas C. McMurtrie

The early history of Texas was colorful and turbulent and, as a result, we do not have preserved the same completeness and continuity of records as have been preserved in many of our states. For this reason the history of the pioneer press in Texas is difficult to trace and when we can trace it, we are often unable to find extant examples of the printing produced.

From 1690 onward, the Spanish began the establishment of missions, military posts, or settlements throughout Texas, and in 1727 the province of Tejas was set up, the name deriving from the local Tejas Indians. There was a fine opportunity for colonization until Louisiana passed under United States sovereignty in 1803, but the Spaniards failed to take advantage of it.

Between 1799 and 1821, there were several unofficial military expeditions into Texas with the intention of freeing it from Spanish rule, and usually, also, perhaps, of adding it to the United States. Two of these had important bearings on the origin of printing in Texas. The first of them was led by Francisco Xavier de Mina, who was inspired by Dr. Servando de Mier to bring about the freedom of Mexico. Mier was a Mexican friar who had been exiled, persecuted, and unfrocked before he met Mina in England and planned with him the expedition of 1816-1817. They sailed from Mexico by way of Baltimore, where they took on Samuel Bangs, a printer, and proceeded to Sota la Marina in Mexico, stopping for a

¹A chapter in the forthcoming volume, *The Pioneer Press in the United States*, by Douglas C. McMurtrie, to be published in the early part of 1932.

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short time in the harbor of Galveston to do the first printing on Texas soil.

The second expedition with an influence on printing history was that led by James Long, a former officer in the United States Army. This expedition, active from 1819 to 1821, made its headquarters for the most part at Nacogdoches, where we shall find that a printing plant was established and a newspaper published during the year of Long's activities.

One of the most important events in Texas history was the beginning of colonization of three hundred settlers from the states by Stephen F. Austin in 1821. Many thousands more came to Texas before 1835. As it developed, this colonization proved more important to the eventual acquisition of Texas by the United States than any other single influence.

In 1821, by the Florida treaty, the United States relinquished to Spain its claims to Texas, but as this was the final year of Mexico's successful war of independence, the title vested, to all intents and purposes, in the new Mexican government. There came to be two factions in Texas, one advocating rebellion against Mexican rule, the other led by Stephen Austin, advocating a peaceful course. The issue was brought to a head, however, in 1835, when Santa Anna renounced the Mexican federal constitution and set himself up as dictator. A "consultation" of representatives of the American settlements throughout Texas met at San Felipe de Austin the latter part of 1835.

Largely through Austin's influence, a project of secession was voted down and a program of coöperation with the Mexican constitutionalists was adopted. Henry Smith was named governor of the provisional government, with Sam Houston as commanding general of the military forces. The forces of Santa Anna were defeated by the Texans in several engagements, but a lack of unanimity on the question of independence weakened further operations. The tables were turned with the fall of the Alamo and the subsequent massacre of its gallant defenders. Two weeks later, another Texan force was defeated and slaughtered in like manner. Sam Houston retreated to the San Jacinto, but here he overwhelmed the Mexican forces and captured Santa Anna himself. This victory ended hostilities.

In the meantime, the proponents of independence had made a declaration of autonomy on March 2, 1836. Sam Houston was

chosen in September, 1836, as first president of the Republic of Texas. In December, 1845, Texas was admitted to the union of the states.

The act of annexation, complicated by certain boundary disputes, precipitated the Mexican War, in which the United States was victorious. American sovereignty was conceded, and all points at issue were settled in the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, concluded February 2, 1848.

The story of Samuel Bangs and his printing at Galveston has hitherto been surrounded with much uncertainty. The principal authority on which our knowledge regarding the press of Bangs was formerly based gives the date of his work as 1816.² But thanks to a recent searching inquiry by Mrs. Lota M. Spell,³ going back to original sources, we are now able definitely to fix the year of Bangs's first printing on Texas soil as 1817 and to trace the activities of this printer both before and after this date.

Samuel Bangs was born in Boston about 1794, the third of his name in direct succession. His father was a glazier, and the source of Bangs's knowledge of the printing art is not known. When Colonel Mina and Dr. Mier set out from England on their expedition to Mexico, they brought with them a press but no printer. They stopped at Baltimore for supplies and hoping for financial support, and while they were there Bangs was enlisted as a member of the little force. They left Baltimore in September, 1816, and early in 1817 they were off the coast of Texas, and halted at Galveston Island. The portable press from England was set up, and a printing office was established under the direction of Dr. Joaquin Infante, Bangs apparently acting only as printer.⁴ On February 22, 1817, was printed a *Proclama del General Mina*, dated at Galveston. This constitutes the earliest known Texas printing, and although no copy of this broadside (which was undoubtedly the form it took) can be located today, the full text has been re-

²Gray, A. C., "History of the Texas Press," in Dudley G. Wooten's *Comprehensive History of Texas* (Dallas, 1898), II, 368.

³Spell, Lota M., "Samuel Bangs, the First Printer in Texas," *Hispanic American Historic Review* (Durham, 1931), XI, 248-258. Mrs. Spell has gone to original documents in the Mexican and Texan archives and presents a remarkably detailed and authoritative account. For the further facts regarding Bangs's activities here set forth I am indebted to the same authority.

⁴Bustamante, Carlos Maria de, *Cuadro Historica de la Revolucion Mexicana* (Mexico, 1844), IV, 337.

printed.⁵ On the verso appeared the statement that the document was "impreso por Juan J. M. Laran y S. Bancs."⁶

With one possible exception, the *Proclama* was the only printing done by Bangs in Texas at this period, and after 1817 he was not to print again within the borders of the present state for twenty-one years. The possible exception was another proclamation issued by General Mina at the mouth of the Rio Grande on April 12, 1817, addressed to his *Compañeros de armas*.⁷ It seems likely that this was printed, and by Bangs. And the probability is that it was printed on the Texas side of the river.⁸

In 1839 Bangs was again to appear on the scene of his first work and begin publication of the *Galvestonian*. He followed this by work on the *San Luis Advocate*, published on Galveston Island, where the 1817 *Proclama* had been printed. In 1842 he established another Galveston paper, the *Commercial Chronicle*, and in 1845 he began the *Galveston Daily Globe*. Early in 1846 he established the first of the war newspapers, the *Corpus Christi Gazette*, which closed his remarkable career as a Texas printer. His period of activity in Texas covered twenty-nine years, with a lapse of more than two decades between his first and second appearances.⁹

⁵Bustamante, IV, 317-323. W. D. Robinson, *Memorias de la Revolucion* (London, 1824), 59.

⁶Bustamante, IV, 337, note.

⁷Bustamante, IV, 333, gives the text of this statement likewise in full.

⁸In view of the lack of certainty regarding this printing point, it is disregarded in the sequential numbering of printing points in the portion of this article that follows.

⁹A great deal of Bangs's work was done in Mexico, during the twenty-one year interlude between his two Texas periods, and after his work was completed there. He did the first printing in Texas; he introduced the press to the Mexican states of Tamaulipas and Coahuila; he was the first printer in Monterey, capital of Nuevo Leon in Mexico; he printed the first Galveston daily, the *Chronicle*; and he published the second English paper in Mexico, the *Matamoras Reveille*.

After Bangs issued the *Proclama* from the press on Galveston Island, the Mina expedition again set sail, and April 12, 1817, they were at the mouth of the Rio Grande where General Mina issued the statement *Compañeros de armas*. The landing at Sota la Marina in April, 1817, was commemorated by printing a patriotic song in five stanzas, composed by Joaquin Infante, under whose direction the printing office had been conducted on Galveston Island. It carried the imprint: "Sota la Marina, 1817. Samuel Bangs, impresor de la division auxiliar de la republica mexicana." (Spell, p. 250.) A *Boletin* was also established and several numbers were printed.

Meantime the chief purpose of the expedition had not been forgotten, and Mina had set out for the interior of Mexico, leaving a small force at Sota la Marina with Mier and Bangs. Sota la Marina was soon taken by Arredondo, the royalist leader, and the members of the revolutionary

The next printing known to have been done in Texas took place in 1819 at Nacogdoches, in the eastern part of the present state. On August 14 of that year appeared the first number of the *Texas Republican*, the first newspaper published in Texas. No copy of this paper has survived nor is there extant any local record of its publication. We know of its existence only through references to it in contemporary newspapers of St. Louis and New Orleans, acknowledging receipt of the first and subsequent issues and quoting

expedition were ordered killed. Bangs alone, at least so he thought, escaped execution, because of the fact that he was a printer. Mier was also spared, although Bangs did not know this, and was taken to the prison of San Juan de Ulloa in the harbor of Vera Cruz. He was later taken to Spain, escaped to Havana, and eventually reached Mexico. In 1822, Bangs learned of Mier's presence in Mexico City and wrote him an account of his own experiences:

"I am well and have been in this town [Saltillo] three months since I came with the Commandante Gaspar Lopez; for you know how Arredondo took possession of the press when we were made prisoners and that I had the good fortune to have my life spared as I was a printer. Since then I have exercised my profession for the government at a salary so miserable that I could hardly subsist; even now I am paid only 18 pesos a month, but with treatment as contemptible as if I were a prisoner. These gentlemen do not remember that I also exposed my life for the liberty of the north; although it was not effected as we had planned."

He continued to print at Saltillo until 1823, when he returned to the United States until 1827. In that year he went back to Mexico, taking with him a new press which he established at Victoria, capital of Tamaulipas, and soon sold to that state. He then returned to Saltillo, and, having obtained another press, again began to print there. He stayed there till 1830, when he sold the press to the state of Coahuila and Texas, and having become a Mexican citizen he settled down to farm on the Colorado River. Within a few years he returned to the printing trade and in 1835 was government printer for Tamaulipas. His first wife died the next year, and he left Mexico to find safety for his children from the Texan Revolution.

Between 1836 and 1838 Bangs was in the United States. According to one account, he went to Mobile and opened a printing office there, and according to another version he returned to Baltimore, where he married a Miss Caroline French, and thence moved to Cincinnati, Ohio. I can find no trace of any printing activity on his part in Mobile. By 1838 he was in New Orleans. In February, 1838, he made an unsuccessful attempt to obtain a position on the *Houston Telegraph*, and by April he was at Galveston, where he established the *Galvestonian*, the first daily issued there. George H. and Henry R. French, his brothers-in-law, both experienced newspaper men, were associated with him. John Gladwin was the editor until October, 1838, when H. R. French took his place, until May, 1840, at least. In September, 1840, the *San Luis Advocate* was begun on Galveston Island, and Bangs is believed to have been associated with it, at least as a contributor.

About August, 1842, Bangs established the *Galveston Commercial Chronicle*, later the *Independent Chronicle*. In the fall of 1845 Bangs was publishing another paper, the *Galveston Daily Globe*, with B. F. Neal, formerly of the *Galveston News*, as editor. January 1, 1846, Bangs began the first of the "war" newspapers, at Corpus Christi, under the name of the *Corpus Christi Gazette*. It lasted only a few months, and then Bangs

material from them.¹⁰ This is, however, perfectly conclusive evidence. Eli Harris, a native of North Carolina, was named as the printer. We are also told that Horatio Bigelow, a member of General Long's Supreme Council, acted as editor.¹¹

The columns of the *Texas Republican* were undoubtedly largely filled with matters of political and military interest, but there were a few advertisements, one of which invited the residents of Nacogdoches to meet at Mr. Cargill's residence for the purpose of selecting trustees for a "seminary of learning." Another indicated that Mr. Madden had entered on the construction of a saw and grist mill.¹²

This first known Texas newspaper¹³ did not last long—not more than two months—for, with the success of the royalist forces, the inhabitants of Nacogdoches were forced to flee across the Sabine

moved nearer the scene of action. Bangs and Gideon Lewis, formerly of the *Galveston News*, announced a *Rio Grande Herald* for Matamoras, but instead the *Matamoras Reville* was established in June, 1846. This was the second paper to be printed in English on Mexican territory. The *Reville* began as a bi-lingual paper, but the Spanish section was soon dropped, and a separate paper in that language was issued by Bangs. An article in this Spanish publication displeased General Taylor, in command of the United States troops in that region, and he ordered the printing office closed in August, 1846.

After the Matamoras fiasco, Bangs went to Point Isabel in Texas, where he lived for several years. Early in the fifties he removed to Kentucky and died there, probably at Ashland. One of his children by his first marriage, James Bangs, carried on the printing tradition, working on the *Galveston News* until his death in the seventies.

¹⁰The first number of the *Texas Republican* is referred to in the *St. Louis Enquirer* for September 15, 1819, the *New Orleans Gazette de la Louisiane* for September 4, 1819, and the *New Orleans L'Ami des Lois et Journal du Commerce* for September 4, 1819. These discoveries were reported by E. W. Winkler in the *Quarterly of the Texas Historical Association*, VI (1902), 162-165, VII (1904), 242-243.

¹¹Winkler, 1902, p. 162. Barker seems a little troubled by the mention of both Harris and Bigelow, apparently assuming that the *Texas Republican* was a one-man newspaper. Even the most elementary beginnings of pioneer newspapers sometimes found two or more men working together. The first two newspapers west of the Atlantic coastal plain showed this. Joseph Hall and John Scull combined to publish the *Pittsburgh Gazette*; and John Bradford of Kentucky, not a practical printer, had his brother Fielding Bradford and Thomas Parvin as assistants in publishing the *Kentucky Gazette*.

¹²These advertisements are mentioned in the contemporary notice of the *Republican* in the *St. Louis Enquirer* (Winkler, VI, 163).

¹³The reference to the *Texas Republican* as the first known Texas newspaper should be interpreted as meaning the earliest newspaper concerning which we have unequivocal evidence. During the writing of this chapter I have heard report of a possibly still earlier newspaper, *El Mejicana*, published by a printer named Toledo, but this report I am as yet unable either to confirm or deny.

River. The press itself was destroyed on the spot by the royalists, as Eli Harris told years later.¹⁴

The next printing in Texas of which we have any report was done at San Antonio, much farther to the west. An American named Asbridge published in the *New Orleans Louisiana Advertiser* of May 23, 1823, a prospectus of the *Texas Courier*, to be published "every Wednesday morning in Spanish and English." This prospectus was dated April 9. The publisher-to-be deplored "the vicious policy of Spain, which for three hundred years had concealed from the world the rich and beneficent province of Texas, neglected education, stifled the arts, and discouraged industry." But now, however, the district of Bexar, which previously "was not thought deserving of a primary school, is in possession of a printing press."

Whether issues of the *Courier* ever appeared and, if so, how long it was published, are questions which must unfortunately remain in the realm of conjecture. It appears quite certain that it was printed, for we know that Asbridge had a press at San Antonio on which he printed three broadside notices for the governor. He rendered a bill for this printing in June and July of 1823, the charge being \$45 for twenty copies of each.¹⁵ But, still better, copies of these printed notices are extant today. Further evidence of the *Courier* is found in a letter from Stephen F. Austin, in which he wrote on May 20, 1823.¹⁶ "I am told you have a newspaper in Bexar, which I am rejoiced to hear. It will be of incalculable advantage to Bexar and the whole province." On the thirteenth of June, however, he wrote that the government had purchased the equipment and was removing it to Monterey. This is the last we hear of Asbridge and his printing venture.

After these sporadic attempts at establishing the press in Texas there was a period of quiet until the fall of 1829,¹⁷ when two

¹⁴Spell, p. 251, citing a letter from Eli Harris to M. B. Lamar, of January 18, 1841, in the Lamar Papers.

¹⁵The bill for \$45 is dated July 10, 1823. It is among the Bexar Archives at the University of Texas.

¹⁶Letters of Stephen Austin to James B. Austin, May 20 and June 13, 1823, preserved among the Austin Papers at the University of Texas.

¹⁷Barker, E. C., "Notes on Early Texas Newspapers," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, XXI, October, 1917, p. 128, supposed the existence of a press in 1824 at San Felipe de Austin on the basis of an undated letter from Austin to J. H. Bell in which Austin says "as you will see by reading next Saturday's paper." Further examination, however, leads him to con-

papers were begun almost simultaneously at Nacogdoches and at San Felipe de Austin. We are here on more satisfactory ground, for we have not only records that the publications were issued, but a good file of the issues of one of them. Nacogdoches was a little ahead of San Felipe de Austin, but the paper established in the latter town became outstandingly successful, and with its origin the printing art is generally considered to have become a fixture in Texas.

Milton Slocum, a young printer from Massachusetts who had recently been at work in Louisiana, came with two companions and a press to Nacogdoches in June, 1829. During the next month Slocum was accepted as a citizen and took the oath required of printers not to print any seditious documents. About the fourth of September, 1829, Slocum printed the first number of his *Mexican Advocate* in Spanish and English. This information also comes to us only through mention of this publication in other newspapers.¹⁸ The *Advocate* continued for some months at least, but the exact length of its life is not known. Slocum continued to live at Nacogdoches and was officially listed as a printer until 1832, in which year he is described as a farmer.¹⁹

Godwin Brown Cotten was the founder at San Felipe de Austin of the *Texas Gazette*, begun September 25, 1829, less than a month after Slocum's *Mexican Advocate*. Cotten had previously been publisher of the *Louisiana Gazette* at New Orleans in 1815-1816 and from 1816 to 1819 of the *Mobile Gazette* at Mobile, Alabama. San Felipe de Austin, now San Felipe, is much farther south than Nacogdoches, being located about fifty miles west of Houston. Cotten had arrived at Austin's colony August 10, 1829, from Louisiana, being then thirty-eight years old. Publication of the *Texas Gazette* was proposed immediately, but illness delayed Cotten until the end of September. Punning on the publisher's name, this newspaper was evidently dubbed by some "The Cotton Plant." Bancroft took this seriously and so records the title of this paper.²⁰

clude that this letter belongs to 1830 and that the reference is probably to the *Texas Gazette*.

¹⁸The *Arkansas Gazette* of September 23, 1829. Winkler, *Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association*, VII, 243, quotes a notice of this paper in the *St. Louis Beacon* of November 14, 1829, taken from the *New York Courier* of October 23, 1829.

¹⁹Barker, *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, XXI, 130.

²⁰Bancroft, H. H., "Newspapers of Texas," in his *History of the North Mexican States and Texas* (San Francisco, 1889), II, 548.

In November, 1829, Cotten suspended publication of his paper for nearly three months²¹ to release his equipment for printing the *Translation of the Laws, Orders, and Contracts on Colonization, from January, 1821, up to this time, in virtue of which Col. Stephen Austin has introduced and settled foreign emigrants in Texas, with an Explanatory Introduction*. This pamphlet was extremely important to the colonists of San Felipe. The translation was made and the introduction written by Austin. It is the earliest known book or pamphlet printed in Texas.

Cotten sold the *Texas Gazette* to Robert M. Williamson in January, 1831. Williamson had formerly edited the *Gazette* under Cotten,²² and he was now associated with John Aitken in its publication under the new name of the *Mexican Citizen*, the first issue of which must have appeared early in February, 1831. Williamson had been in Texas since 1827, and Aitken came there, probably in 1831, from Pensacola, Florida, where he had been associated in the publication of the *Pensacola Gazette* in 1830.²³ In December, 1831, Cotten regained control of the paper and again issued it as the *Texas Gazette*.

There are various contradictory stories concerning the establishment of the press in Brazoria, not far from San Felipe de Austin, where printing was next introduced.²⁴ The most probable reconciliation of the various accounts offered is that Cotten moved his press from San Felipe de Austin some time during the first part of 1832 to Brazoria and published his paper there as the *Texas Gazette and Brazoria Commercial Advertiser*. July 23, 1832, Cotten transferred his press to D. W. Anthony, who continued the paper as the *Constitutional Advocate and Brazoria Advertiser*. Anthony died of the cholera in 1833, and his paper was discontinued. Late in 1833 his press, to which there had been five claimants, was placed in operation by Oliver H. Allen and John A. Wharton, who published the *Advocate of the People's Rights* at Brazoria, the latter withdrawing almost immediately. Probably

²¹It was noted in the issue of November 7, 1829 (No. 6) that it was to be suspended at request of subscribers to make this publication possible. Regular issue was resumed with No. 7, January 23, 1830.

²²Williamson was listed as editor in Nos. 8 to 20, inclusive (January 30 to April 24, 1830). In the issue of May 8, 1830 (No. 22), G. B. Cotten reappears as editor.

²³Knauss, James O., *Territorial Florida Journalism* (Deland, 1926), p. 21.

²⁴Ably discussed by Barker, *The Quarterly*, XXI, 137.

it was still Cotten's original press that was used by Gray and Harris²⁵ in establishing the next paper, the *Texas Republican*, published from July, 1834, through 1836. Benjamin Franklin Cage and Franklin C. Gray²⁶ contemplated a *Brazoria Emigrant* in 1834, but it was probably never published.²⁷

In 1835, presses again became active in Nacogdoches and San Felipe de Austin, and Matagorda for the first time acquired a press. Little is known of the Matagorda paper except that Simon Mussina is believed to have established it in 1835 and that it ran for about three years.²⁸

The earliest Matagorda newspapers of which copies have been preserved are the *Matagorda Bulletin*, a weekly, of which J. W. J. Niles was editor and proprietor, which made its bow to the public on August 2, 1837. The *Colorado Gazette and Advertiser*, printed and published by James Atwell and edited by W. Donaldson, began publication in May, 1839.²⁹

Nacogdoches broke its second interval without a press in November, 1835, when D. E. Lawhon established there the *Texian and Emigrant's Guide* and managed to keep it alive for a few months. The most important of the papers begun in this year was the *Telegraph and Texas Register* at San Felipe de Austin, originally projected as the *Telegraph and Texas Planter*, established on October 10 by Joseph Baker, Gail Borden, Jr., and Thomas H.

²⁵The Gray was Franklin C. Gray. Harris apparently retired some time in January or February, 1835, as the issue of February 14 appears as "printed and published by F. C. Gray."

²⁶Gray had previously been foreman of the *New Orleans Commercial Bulletin*. His wife was suspected of having intrigued to effect the escape of Santa Anna after the battle of San Jacinto. Through her, suspicion was also cast upon Gray himself, and his paper is said to have suffered and finally expired as a consequence. See A. C. Gray's chapter in Wooten's *Comprehensive History of Texas*, II, 369.

²⁷Among the later newspapers at Brazoria were *The People*, a weekly printed and published by T. Lager and A. P. Thompson, which to judge by the earliest issue located (Vol. I, No. 10, April 18, 1838), first appeared in February, 1838; and the *Brazos Courier*, a weekly printed and published by R. L. Weir, which began publication early in 1839 and ran at least to the end of 1840. Volume I, No. 42, is dated December 3, 1839.

²⁸A. C. Gray, *op. cit.*, p. 370, is authority for this statement. Stuart writes: "Mr. Mussina, who was always credited with having been among the pioneer newspaper men of Texas, lived to advanced years and died in Galveston, February 11, 1889, aged 88 years and 7 months." (Ben Stuart, in an unpublished manuscript, "History of Texas Newspapers from the Earliest Period to the Present" (1917), in the Rosenberg Library, Galveston.)

²⁹Determined from the date of the first issue located, Vol. I, No. 4, June 6, 1839.

Borden under the firm name of Baker and Bordens.³⁰ It became the organ of the provisional government.

When the Mexican forces led by Santa Anna approached San Felipe in March, 1836, the *Telegraph* was moved to Harrisburg, on Buffalo Bayou, near the present city of Houston. Harrisburg thus became the sixth printing town in Texas. But the *Telegraph* was no more than set up in its new location for the issue of April 14, 1836, when Santa Anna's troops entered Harrisburg and destroyed the printing office after only six copies of that issue had been printed. The press was dumped into Buffalo Bayou, later to be rescued and used in printing the *Houston Morning Star*. Publication of the *Telegraph* was interrupted for about four months and was then resumed at Columbia.

An idea of the difficulties of printing a newspaper under the political and military handicaps of the time is given in the issue of the *Telegraph and Texas Register* of January 18, 1837. After referring to the catastrophes at the Alamo and Goliad, the editor writes in distinctive phraseology:

"All these things passed and were noticed in our paper; and pursuing, undismayed, our duties, and prosecuting our labors at San Felipe, believing that so long as a paper should be printed west of the Brazos the people east of it would not take the alarm. And though deprived of the services of Mr. Joseph Baker, one of the former firm, and whose pen until now had supplied our columns with every information which could profit or benefit the community, or aid the cause which he now had shouldered his gun to defend; we endeavored to cheer and encourage our countrymen to the contest, which will be seen by reference to our two last papers published at San Felipe, on the 17th and 24th of March. Before the last date, the presses at Brazoria and Nacogdoches had ceased their publications.

"Our army, on its retreat, reached San Felipe on the 27th, at night; till now we had no intention to cross the Brazos with our press, which with the aid of Capt. Baker's company, left at that place, we effected on the 30th March, but not without the satisfaction of being in the rear guard—the last to consent to move, we were resolved not to be in front. . . .

"At this juncture, we were irresolute, whether to attempt, for the present, the publication of our paper. The destruction of our buildings, and with them much of the valuable furniture which

³⁰Gail Borden, Jr., was later the originator of a method of condensing milk which made him and his heirs to the present day wealthy, and was also the inventor of a meat biscuit.

JOURNALS OF THE SENATE

OF THE

REPUBLIC OF TEXAS.

FIRST CONGRESS—FIRST SESSION.

COLUMBIA:

PRINTED BY G. & T. H. BORDEN, PUBLIC PRINTERS.

1836.

[Title Page of the Earliest Known Columbia Imprint]

we could not remove; the great difficulty of procuring teams, and the preparation of new buildings, after having expended most of our means in putting up the establishment, the payment of journeymen, having received but little from our subscribers, and nothing for the public printing, we felt for a moment discouraged in carrying on the further publication of the paper.—But receiving an invitation from the government at Harrisburgh, to continue our labors, as we were the last and only medium of publication they could possibly obtain, we felt that duty called us, and having mustered all of our own and a friend's team, we arrived at Harrisburgh; determined to spend the last dollar in the cause we had embarked: . . .

“The difficulty and labor of removing so heavy an establishment, were not the greatest inconvenience to which the preserving of the press to serve our country exposed us and our friend. The team employed in conveying it to Harrisburgh, being detained to haul public property to the army, our families were compelled to flee from Fort Bend, . . . without the means of taking even their necessary apparel. . . .

“Every thing destroyed at San Felipe and Fort Bend—our press again set up at Harrisburgh—a paper issued on the 14th, containing the most important public documents, among which the executive ordinance, the only link unbroken, which, in the chain of government could hold Texas as a nation; the importance of which is remembered by many, when last fall the powers of the government, *ad interim*, were doubted—the archives [*sic*] ransacked to find the authority, when lo ! it was found in the only number of the Telegraph printed at Harrisburgh, which we preserved from the general destruction of that place. . . .

“The destruction of the press by Santa Anna, at a time when he believed he had full possession of the country, and when he could have continued its operation without cost or trouble, and issued his proclamations and printed his officials with all the facilities desirable, clearly proves that he . . . ‘prefers darkness rather than light.’”

Gail Borden attempted to procure a press in New Orleans to re-establish the *Telegraph*, but the notes of indebtedness which he held from the Texas government were considered worthless and he was unsuccessful. He mortgaged his Texas property and at last got a press in Cincinnati, together with the necessary materials. With these the Bordens went to Columbia, Texas, and established the first press there, on which they printed the continuation of the *Telegraph and Texas Register*, beginning in August, 1836.³¹

³¹A later newspaper at Columbia was *The Planter*, a weekly printed and published by Samuel J. Durnett, who had previously established the *San Luis Advocate* in 1840. To judge by the date of the earliest issue located

It was at Columbia, the first capital of the Republic of Texas, that the initial public printing of the new-born nation was done. Two printed documents of 1836 were *An Accurate and Authentic Report of the Proceedings of the House of Representatives. From the 3d of October to the 23d of December*, and the *Journals of the Senate of the Republic of Texas*. These bore the imprint of "G. and T. H. Borden, Public Printers." Early in 1837 appeared an interesting document, *Evacuation of Texas*, which was likewise printed by the Bordens. This was a translation of the defense by General Vicente Filisola of his actions in command of the Mexican forces in the late conflict with the Texans. Later in the same year, as is indicated by the imprint of "Borden & Moore, Public Printers,"³² there was reprinted at Columbia the *Translation of the Laws, Orders and Contracts, on Colonization* by Stephen F. Austin, the first issue of which, printed in 1829, has already been mentioned.

In May, 1837, the Bordens moved their paper to the newly established town of Houston, on Buffalo Bayou, fifty miles from Columbia, for the reason that the state capital was moving there. Boggy river bottoms necessitated the removal of the press by boat through the gulf and up the bayou. When publication was begun at Houston in May, 1837, the Bordens and the *Telegraph* had operated in four towns and they had brought the first printing to three: Harrisburg, Columbia, and Houston. The *Telegraph* was sold to Jacob W. Cruger and Dr. Francis Moore, Jr., in June, 1837, and was published by them for some years.

E. Humphreys & Company began publication of the daily *Morning Star* at Houston on April 8, 1839. It was edited by John W. Eldridge and printed at the office of the *Telegraph*. It later became a tri-weekly, and in 1844 its publication was taken over by James F. Cruger. These two papers were followed in Houston by the *National Banner*, published by Niles & Company in 1838; the *National Intelligencer*, published by Samuel Whiting in 1839; the *Times*, published by Osborn and Liveley, and edited by A. M. Tompkins, in 1840; the *Houstonian*, published by D. E. and John N. O. Smith, in 1841; and the *Weekly Citizen*, published by Smith, Benson and Smith in 1843.

(Vol. 1, No. 37, August 19, 1843), *The Planter* made its first appearance in December, 1842.

³²Francis J. Moore, Jr., joined the Borden firm on March 14, 1837.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE

TO WHOM

WAS REFERRED SO MUCH OF

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

AS RELATES TO

THE LAND BILL.

HOUSTON:

PRINTED BY BORDEN & MOORE, PUBLIC PRINTERS.

1837.

[Title Page of the Earliest Known Houston Imprint]

MEMORIALS

OF

GEORGE FISHER,

LATE SECRETARY TO THE EXPEDITION

OF

Gen. JOSE ANTONIO MEXIA,

AGAINST TAMPICO, IN NOVEMBER,

1835.

PRESENTED TO THE FOURTH AND FIFTH CONGRESSES

OF THE

REPUBLIC OF TEXAS,

PRAYING FOR RELIEF

IN FAVOR OF THE MEMBERS OF THE SAID EXPEDITION.

HOUSTON:
PRINTED AT THE TELEGRAPH OFFICE
1840.

[A Rare Houston Imprint of 1840]

Galveston, site of the activities of Samuel Bangs in 1816, first acquired a permanent press and a newspaper in the late spring of 1838 when John S. Evans began the *Commercial Intelligencer*. Galveston's most important early paper, the *Civilian and Galveston City Gazette*, was begun at about the same time in Houston by Hamilton Stuart, who moved it to Galveston in September, 1838. Also in 1838, Samuel Bangs, pioneer of the printing art in Texas, established the *Daily Galvestonian*, the first daily in the town, with John Gladwin as editor, later succeeded by Henry R. French. It lasted about two years. In 1840 Galveston had the *Courier* and in 1841 the *People's Advocate*, the *Advertiser*, and the *Morning Herald*. In 1842 Samuel Bangs established the *Commercial Chronicle*, and February, 1844, M. Cronican & Company began publication of the *Weekly News*.

In 1839 three more towns in Texas acquired presses, Richmond, Washington, and Austin. David L. Wood founded the *Richmond Telescope*, the first issue of which appeared April 27, 1839. It lasted only a year.³³ Also begun at Richmond in 1839 was the *Gazette*, published by R. E. Handy. In 1836, William W. Gant and Andrew J. Greer had issued proposals for published a *Texas Republican* at Washington, but not until July, 1839, when J. Warren J. Niles established the *Texas Emigrant*, did Washington actually have a press. The *Texian and Brazos Farmer* was published weekly at Washington by G. H. Harrison, beginning in June, 1842, and the *National Vindicator* was established in the same town by Thomas Johnson in August of the following year. On December 7, 1844, Miller and Cushney began publication weekly of the *Texas National Register*, W. D. Miller occupying the editorial chair.³⁴

Like Washington, Austin was promised a newspaper some time before one was actually begun. The first issue of the *Richmond Telescope* in April, 1839, carried James Burke's proposals for an

³³In June, William W. Bell became publisher, with Wood acting as assistant editor. In July the title was changed to *Richmond Telescope and Register*, and in August the name of J. H. Parkerson is added as another assistant editor. In September the name of D. L. Wood disappears and on September 18 Sidney S. Callender assumed control. The issue of March 17, 1840, was edited by N. Maillard and S. S. Callender. The last issue appeared April 11, 1840.

³⁴The issue of November 15, 1845, shows the paper to have been moved to Austin, with John S. Ford as editor, and Ford and Cronican as publishers.

LAWS
PASSED BY
THE SEVENTH CONGRESS
OF THE
REPUBLIC OF TEXAS.

PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY.

WASHINGTON
THOMAS JOHNSON, PUBLIC PRINTER—TERRA STAPET

1813

[Title Page of the Earliest Known Imprint from Washington, Texas]

APPENDIX
TO THE
JOURNALS
OF THE
House of Representatives:
SEVENTH CONGRESS.

PRINTED AT THE VINDICATOR OFFICE.

[The Only Known Occurrence of the Imprint of the
Washington *Vindicator*]

Epitomist at Austin, but the *Austin City Gazette*, begun October 30, 1839, by Samuel Whiting, "Printer to Congress," was probably the capital's first paper. Whiting had previously been publishing the *National Intelligencer* at Houston and doing a certain amount of the public printing. His Austin newspaper was continued regularly until 1842, when all the Austin papers were suspended through fear of a Mexican invasion and because of the consequent removal of the capital to Washington, on the Brazos.

In January of 1840, Cruger and Bonnell, "public printers," began publication of the *Texas Sentinel*, a bi-weekly edited by George W. Bonnell.³⁵ On November 27, 1841, the *Daily Bulletin* began publication at Austin, and in December G. H. Harrison started the *Daily Texian*.

San Augustine, where printing began in 1840, was at that time the only printing point in eastern Texas. Nacogdoches, site of the second press in the state, had for several years had no printing, and most of the activities of the press had been concentrated in the small territory around Galveston Bay, with occasional expansion to the west, as in the case of Austin and San Antonio. Alanson Wyllys Canfield founded the *Journal and Advertiser* in San Augustine in May of 1840. The name of this paper was changed in May of the following year to the *Red-Lander*, edited by Canfield. George W. Morris was named as printer beginning in January, 1843.

About September 1, 1840, San Luis, on Galveston Island, became the fourteenth town in Texas to have printing with the establishment of the *Advocate* by S. J. Durnett, with Tod Robinson as editor. In the latter part of the next year it moved to Galveston with apparently only a break in numbering, being renamed the *Texas Times*, published weekly by D. Davis, with Ferdinand Pinckard acting as editor.

Another outlying printing point was Clarksville, where the *Northern Standard* began publication on August 20, 1842, with Charles de Morse as editor and proprietor. He came to Clarksville in the far northeastern corner of Texas at the time of the threatened invasion of Austin in 1842. The *Standard* continued for nearly half a century.

In January, 1844, a press was established in La Grange, which

³⁵The issue of January 23, 1841, was by "Cruger and Wing, public printers."

CONSTITUCION

DEL

ESTADO DE TEJAS

Adoptada en Convencion, en la Ciudad de
Austin, 1845.

Traducida de orden de la Convencion, por GEO. FISHER.

AUSTIN:

IMPRESO EN LA OFICINA DE LA "NUEVA ERA."
1845.

[Title Page of a Little Known Austin Imprint]

thus became the sixteenth known printing point in Texas, with the *La Grange Intelligencer*, published weekly by William P. Bradburn and James P. Longley.³⁶

At Marshall, the *Harrison Times* was published at least as early as July, 1844, for in that month it is referred to³⁷ by Anson Jones as "a well conducted paper with a circulation of four or five hundred."

A printing enterprise that played a considerable part in early Texas history although it may not have been conducted on Texas soil, was a newspaper published by a group of printers in one of the units of the United States Army during the Mexican War. On June 1, 1846, the first issue of the *Republic of the Rio Grande* made its appearance from the press of the former Matamoras *Boletin*.³⁸ It was printed on a letter sheet by J. N. Fleeson, a printer from New Orleans, and edited by Hugh McLeod. The military authorities did not relish McLeod's editorial policies, and he was soon forced to retire. The name of the paper was then changed to the *American Flag*. It came then under the management of John N. Peoples, another New Orleans printer, who in turn was succeeded by J. R. Palmer. At first a weekly, it was soon made into a semi-weekly. During its existence the *American Flag* came to be one of the best known and most important newspapers in the Rio Grande region, and many other journals depended upon it for news of happenings at the seat of war. By accident of location it was not strictly speaking a Texas paper, but its importance to Texas and the fact that it can be more conveniently recorded in connection with Texas printing are offered as reasons for mentioning it here.³⁹

³⁶Succeeding William P. Bradburn after the first few issues in the editorial chair of the *La Grange Intelligencer* were William B. McClellan, and on and after May 30, 1844, S. S. B. Fields. In August, 1845, a paper of the same title but with a new volume numbering was published by W. D. McClellan and W. D. Mims.

³⁷See Stuart Manuscript, p. 39, quoting Anson Jones.

³⁸For details of information about this newspaper I am greatly indebted to Mrs. Lota M. Spell, who has generously allowed me to make use of a portion of her article entitled "The Anglo-Saxon Press in Mexico, 1846-47," which is to appear in a forthcoming issue of the *American Historical Review*.

³⁹The earliest issue of the *American Flag* located is Vol. 1, No. 50, November 14, 1846, published at Matamoras by Fleeson, Palmer & Company; a copy is in the American Antiquarian Society. Information concerning its beginning and its earlier issues has been gathered by Mrs.

On the first day of 1846⁴⁰ the *Corpus Christi Gazette* was established by Bangs and Seymour, who on April 2, 1846, disposed of their interests to José de Alba.

In 1845 Texas came into the United States, and from that point onward⁴¹ the details of the history of the press become of lesser importance. Texas had won statehood and in this accomplishment her pioneer printers had played no inconsiderable part.

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Spell from contemporary issues of the *Daily Picayune* and the *Weekly Delta*, of New Orleans, and of the *Democratic Telegraph*, of Houston.

⁴⁰To judge from the date of the first issue located, that of April 2, 1846, Vol. 1, No. 14 (in the American Antiquarian Society). Up to this time it was apparently published by Bangs and Seymour, who announce in this issue that they have disposed of their interests in the *Corpus Christi Gazette* to José de Alba, who was to continue its publication weekly.

⁴¹After statehood, the first town to have a new press was Victoria, in 1846, in which the *Texas Advocate* was founded by Sterne and Logan. Port Lavaca had a press in 1847, and Rusk in 1848. The next year printing was introduced in Paris, Dallas, Huntsville, Brownsville, and Indianola. According to a list of newspapers in existence in 1852 published by the *Indianola Bulletin*, the printing press had by that year been introduced into the following additional Texas towns: Brownsville, Jasper, Tyler, Henderson, Palestine, Jefferson, and Bonham.

According to a list of newspapers published in 1860 recorded by Stuart (pp. 115-119), printing had begun by that year in these towns not already mentioned in this chapter: Bastrop, Beaumont, Bellville, Columbus, Anderson, Cameron, Fort Worth, Hempstead, Quitman, Belton, Gonzales, Shelbyville, Liberty, Goliad, McKinney, Seguin, Weatherford, Corsicana, Sherman, Crockett, Livingston, Waco, Canton, Sabine Pass, Centreville, Gilmer, Brenham, Carthage, Fairfield, Lockhart, Sumter, and Jacksboro.

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The principal authorities on Texas are Barker, Gray, and Bancroft. Barker's account, for the period it covers, is the most thorough and exhaustive, including the valuable information contained in Winkler's notes. Mrs. Spell's contribution on Bangs is invaluable. A bibliography of Texas, now in preparation by Thomas W. Streeter, whose collection of Texiana is important and extensive, will undoubtedly make an important contribution to Texas printing history. Texas book and pamphlet imprints have been given almost no attention whatever by typographic historians and study in this field is urgently needed.

